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Fall 2015

ENGL 2152

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University of New Orleans

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TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

ENGL 2152-477

Instructor: K. Martin

Office: LA 327 Phone: 280-6462 (available during office hours, no answering device)

Office hours: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00-12:30, Wednesday 9:30-12:30, and by appointment

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Course Description and Student Learning Outcomes

This course teaches you how to prepare various documents frequently used in the workplace and expected of professionals in your field —memos, letters, email, instructions, definitions, evaluations, formal reports, presentations and proposals. You will conduct formal research, present your work publicly, and work collaboratively. At the end of the semester you will understand how to communicate effectively in a professional atmosphere. You will craft documents a professional tone that best suits a specific occasion. You will present materials that effectively persuade, convince, motivate and/or inform distinct target audiences and adhere to each assignment's criteria: honesty, clarity, accuracy, comprehensiveness, accessibility, conciseness, professional appearance, and correctness.

Required Texts

Technical Communication, 11th edition, by Mike Markel. (ISBN: 978-1-4576-7337-5)

You must have the correct edition of the textbook.

Launchpad, a feature comes with a **new** edition of the textbook above. If you have a used edition of this book, you may buy Launchpad separately.

Follow these steps to get started with *Launchpad*. If you need additional guidance, consult the student [Quick Start](#) guide, especially the [system requirements](#) which list recommended browsers.

- 1 Go to <http://www.macmillanhighered.com/launchpad/techcomm11e/1901609>
- 2 **Bookmark** the page to make it easy to return to.
- 3 **Enroll** in our course using one of the following options:
 - a If you have an access code, select “I have a student access code,” enter the code exactly as it appears on the card, and click Submit.
 - b If you don't have an access code, either purchase a text package that includes one OR click “I want to purchase access” and follow the instructions.
 - c If you need to start working but can't purchase right away, select “I want temporary access” and follow the instructions.

If you have problems registering, purchasing, or logging in, please contact Customer Support. You can reach a representative 24 hours a day, 7 days a week*:

- through the [online form](#)
- by chat
- by phone at (800) 936-6899 *(9 a.m. to 3 a.m. EST, 7 days a week)

Policies and Requirements

Formal Assignments

At the end of this document is a brief description of each of the formal assignments you will complete this semester, their approximate due dates, and their point value. I reserve the right to alter these assignments,

their requirements, or their point value, though I will never do so arbitrarily or without notice to the entire class. You are responsible for any announcements on Moodle or via UNO email regarding each assignment, which will always supersede the information on the assignment sheet attached here.

Attendance and Tardiness

Because this is an online course, our class meetings will be conducted entirely in Moodle. Each Monday and Thursday by noon, I will post discussion topics (which may be accompanied by instructional video) that must be completed by the following Monday or Thursday, whichever comes first. Not posting a response by its deadline is considered an absence. Missing (or posting late) to more than three discussion forums is grounds for failing this course.

Class Participation (Forums)

The goal of forums is to prepare you to turn in your formally graded projects, all of which are listed under “assignments.” It is unlikely that one can turn in polished and thoughtful projects without significant guidance from me, from one’s peers, and from the textbook. An ideal pattern of response demonstrates that you are using discussion forums to these ends and not simply “filling up space” to complete a requirement. Your responses to discussion forums should be thorough and thoughtful. They should range from a few paragraphs to a page. Discussion forums are intended as a means by which everyone is preparing to complete a project, with a clear intent of inquiry and mutual support. Where there is disagreement, without which these discussions would be of little use to any of us, there must also be respectful and thoughtful disagreement, that which encourages others to clarify, respond, and engage further, rather than to feel attacked, insulted, or shut down.

Any instances in which I see clear disrespect for others (classmates, entire demographics, or me) in posts or email, including but not limited to abusive comments, I will respond just as I would in an onsite class—by involving the Office of Academic Affairs. In short, please don’t be afraid to disagree, but please disagree thoughtfully and respectfully.

Though I will respond to your posts as a group, either in my end comments or in an instructional video, I do not respond to each forum post individually. You will often see that I respond individually to a few posts, but please do not conclude that if I do not respond to your post individually, I have not read it. I read and think about all of your posts that are submitted on time—this is how my own comments and instructional videos take shape and how your grade for class participation is ultimately formed.

After the due date for a forum, I will formulate a response, usually within 24 hours. You are required to return to the forum to review one another’s comments and to review my comments. At the end of the term, I will assign a cumulative grade to your forum responses, which account for 15% of your grade.

Deadlines and Makeup Work

You may turn in one formal assignment (except for the formal report or final exam), without penalty, up to three days after its due date. Any additional late assignments will not be accepted.

Revisions

Around mid-semester, I will offer you the option of revising 10 points worth of your assignments, **excluding** group assignments, process work, and forum posts. A revision does not guarantee that your grade on the assignment will be higher than the grade on the original submission. I strongly recommend scheduling a revision conference with me in person, over the phone, or on Skype before revising an assignment.

Submission Guidelines

Each assignment must adhere to the guidelines for submission announced on Moodle and/or listed on your assignment sheet. For instance, if an assignment is due in the submission inbox provided in Moodle, a hard copy or emailed assignment will not be graded.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty will result in failure of this course. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>

Accommodations for Disability

It is University policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.

Verification of Identity

To ensure academic integrity, all students enrolled in distance learning courses at the University of New Orleans may be required to participate in additional student identification procedures. At the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course, these measures may include on-campus proctored examinations, off-site or online proctored examinations, or other reasonable measures to ensure student identity. Authentication measures for this course are identified below and any fees associated are the responsibility of the student.

The University of New Orleans partners with Proctor U, a live, online proctoring service that allows students to complete exams from any location using a computer, webcam, and reliable internet connection. The verification process for this course is your Moodle login, though I reserve the right at any time to require any or all class members to complete assignments using Proctor U.

Grades

The maximum number of points you can receive in this class is 100. On your assignment sheet, attached, the maximum number of points for each assignment is listed. At the end of the course, I will add your total points to determine your final grade. Your mid-term grade will reflect an average for all of your graded work and your forum participation grade at mid-semester. Your midterm grade is not necessarily an accurate projection of your final grade, given that more than 50% of your grade is still outstanding at midterm.

Grading Guidelines

- An A represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course/assignment requirements.
- A B represents achievement that is significantly beyond the level necessary to meet course/assignment requirements.
- A C represents achievement that meets the course/assignment requirements in every respect.
- A D represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course/assignment requirements.
- An F represents achievement that fails to meet the course/assignment requirements.

You are responsible for meeting all of the requirements of each assignment as they are stated on the assignment sheet and presented on Moodle. You should expect to receive a grade below C if you do not. You are also responsible for contacting me in advance for clarification if you do not understand the requirements. To determine your letter grade on an assignment, divide your score by the number of points possible for the assignment. For the sake of clarity, an A in this class is 90-100, a B is 80-89, a C is 70-79, a D is 60-69, and an F is a grade below 60.

Forum Grades

To earn an A for class discussion (15% of your final grade), you must have missed no more than one discussion*. Your comments must be thoughtful, original, and thorough to the degree that they model engaged response for your peers. You must identify yourself as one who is prepared, curious, and enthusiastic about the subject matter. Your questions and responses and analysis will clearly demonstrate that you are absorbed in the topics at hand. You will have demonstrated clear interest and generosity in your responses to the posts of others. Your comments must be relatively sound in terms of grammar, style, and mechanics.

To earn a B for class discussion, you must have missed no more than two discussions. Your comments must be thoughtful, original, and thorough. You must approach discussions in a spirit of academic inquiry with clear enthusiasm and demonstrated an ability to base your conclusions on evidence that you clearly present to the rest of us. Your discussions will be consistently sound in terms of grammar, style, and mechanics.

To earn a C for class discussion, you must have missed no more than three discussions. Your comments must be thoughtful, original, and thorough. Your responses must adequately address the discussion questions at hand. Your responses must be relatively sound in terms of grammar, style and mechanics.

Missing more than three discussions, developing a habit of simply agreeing with the comments of those who have posted before you, posting responses that are clearly hurried and unenthusiastic, or consistently posting responses that are unclear or unedited, will result in a class participation grade of D or below.

*In some cases I may substitute a Launchpad assignment for a forum. *Launchpad* assignments figure into to your forum grade.

Course Schedule*

The following schedule is tentative. Students are responsible for all changes and additional assignments announced in class.

Week of

Aug 20	Course introduction, personal introductions Chapters 1 and 5
Aug 24	Writing the Evaluation Chapters 3 and 9 Revision and Editing Exercises 1-10 Due in <i>Launchpad</i>
Aug 31	Chapters 10 and 14 Memo to Remington Due
Sept 7	Claim and Adjustment Letters Chapter 14 Revision and Editing Exercises 10-20 Due in <i>Launchpad</i>
Sept 14	Continue Claim and Adjustment Letters Chapter 3
Sept 21	Résumés and Letters of Application Chapters 11 and 15 Claim and Adjustment Letters Due

Sept 28	Résumés and Letters of Application Exercises 21-25 Due in <i>Launchpad</i>
Oct 5	Résumés and Letters of Application Job Application Materials Due
Oct 12	Instructions and Manuals Chapters 20 and 4
Oct 19	Group Project: Evaluating Instructions Chapters 13 and 9 (review) Exercises 26-33 Due in <i>Launchpad</i>
Oct 26	Group Project: Evaluating Instructions Due
Nov 2	Writing Recommendation Reports Chapter 18 Revisions Due (Optional)
Nov 9	Writing Recommendation Reports Chapters 6 and 7 Project Topic Due (via email)
Nov 16	Front and Back Matter Annotated Bibliography Due
Nov 23	Writing Recommendation Reports Draft due
Nov 30	Final Recommendation Report Due

Final Exam: Your final exam will be posted by noon on Monday, December 7, and is due no later than 11:59PM on Thursday, November 10.

***SEE DETAILED ASSIGNMENT SHEET BELOW**

Course Assignments

ENGL 2152-477

*I reserve the right to make changes to the assignments listed below or to change the number of points allotted to each. I will not do so whimsically or arbitrarily or without explaining the reason, which will always involve better preparing you for your profession, or adjusting your workload (within reason) if there is, for instance, an unexpected closure of campus. Any changes will apply to the whole class and not just to one person. The information here will serve as your assignment sheet and you will be responsible for any additional information or submission guidelines discussed on Moodle or announced via email.

Evaluation of Letter (5 points)

Consider yourself a technical writing consultant in Dr. Remington's healthcare network. Revise Dr. Remington's letter, **and in a memo to Dr. Remington**, explain your rationale for the changes you have made. Attach your revision to the memo or integrate parts of it into the memo, whichever works best for you. Your criteria for advising Dr. Remington should be the measures of excellence in technical writing in Chapter 1 of your textbook, as they apply to Dr. Remington's audience, subject and purpose. Remember that you are not Dr. Remington's supervisor. You are his colleague, and your job is to offer him clear, specific, and solid suggestions for revision so that the messaging of your network is consistently effective. I will grade your memo based on the same measures of excellence presented in Chapter 1, as well as your tone. Due Sept 3.

Revision and Editing Exercises in *Launchpad* (5 points)

After thoroughly reading Chapter 10, complete exercises 1-33, beginning on page 244 of your textbook and available in *Launchpad*. We complete this assignment throughout the semester. See both your course schedule and the schedule built into Launchpad for due dates.

Claim and Adjustment Letters (5 points)

Write a claim letter that follows the instructions in Exercise 1 on page 394 or create your own original claim letter. Also write an adjustment letter that follows the instructions in Exercises 3 or 4 on page 383. Sept 21.

Résumé and Letter of Application (10 points)

Find a job ad for a real position in your field for which you might be qualified (now or upon graduation). Write a résumé and letter of application for this position. Include a cut-and-paste or a link to the position announcement (job advertisement). I cannot grade your materials without a copy of the position announcement. Your materials will be evaluated not only on their content and appearance but also on how well they are tailored to the position announcement (job ad). Use the information in Chapter 15 as a guide. Due Oct 8.

Collaborative Project: Evaluation of Instructions (10 points)

Find a set of instructions that you would like to evaluate, as a group, based upon the measures of excellence in technical communication as well as the information in Chapter 20. In a memo to the authors, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the instructions. Give concrete information about what works, and why. Suggest specific changes by offering revised text. Due October 29.

Formal Recommendation Report (30 points)

Prepare a formal recommendation report that examines two ways of approaching a problem or completing a process in your field. After clearly examining each option, demonstrate that one is more effective or efficient. Recommend this option. The abstract and body of your report should effectively target your colleagues—professionals in your field of study. The executive summary of your report should effectively target those within your institution with the executive power to bring about the changes you suggest. Assume that your executive audience does not necessarily share your expertise in your field. Make up any reasonable details about your position.

If you have not yet begun to take classes in your field, please talk to me so that we can formulate an alternate assignment.

All reports should be at least 2,500 words long, follow the guidelines stated in your textbook, and should incorporate a minimum of five sources. Due Dec 3.

Report-related Assignments (5 points each*)

Project Topic: In a professional email to me, clearly introduce your topic and describe the options you will compare. Keep in mind that I am not a professional in your field. Then provide a brief analysis of your audience and a plan for conducting research. Due Nov 9.

Annotated Bibliography: Using MLA format (or the standard citation method for your field), provide a list of ten sources that you have consulted. Annotate the five sources that you are most likely to use. Due Nov 19.

Draft: Submit a complete polished draft of your report for review. I will answer questions, give *general* feedback, and your classmates and I will suggest any major adjustments that need to be made. Make sure that you bring your best work. Submitting a “rough draft” will severely limit the feedback that your classmates and I can provide and will compromise your grade. Due Nov 30.

Other factors in your final grade: class participation (15 points), final exam (5 points).